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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PREF](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI TURKMEN FRONT REPS SAY ITF WILL SUPPORT
FEDERALISM BASED ON GOVERNORATES, NOT OPPOSED TO RETURN OF
DISPLACED KURDS TO KIRKUK, PLEDGE COOPERATION AND SUPPORT
FOR COALITION

(U) Sensitive but unclassified - please protect accordingly.

11. (SBU) Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) Ankara and London reps Ahmet Muratli and Asif Sertturkmen called on PolMilOff Dec. 15. They complained that Kurdish parties were flying flags all over Kirkuk, an act they considered provocative. They also complained that Kurds were disproportionately being given jobs in Kirkuk (claiming that 80 to 85 percent of jobs had gone to Kurds) and that "huge numbers" of Kurds had recently moved into Kirkuk. Muratli and Sertturkmen emphasized that the ITF was not opposed to the return to Kirkuk of Kurds who had been displaced by Saddam. They also pledged their full cooperation and support for the coalition, and expressed frustration that their new leader, Faruk Abdulrahman, had been unable to get an appointment to meet with Amb. Bremer. The ITF and Abdulrahman, they stressed, wanted good contact with the CPA. They also wanted the coalition to succeed so that when it left Iraq, it would do so proud of its accomplishments.

12. (SBU) The ITF reps said the party's goal was to bring all Turkmen together under one political umbrella, and that since the ITF Congress in September, they believed they represented 80 percent of all Iraqi Turkmen. (NOTE: Before the war the ITF claimed to represent all Iraqi Turkmen.) They also said their new leadership has made clear that the ITF has opened the door to good relations with all of Iraq's political parties, including the Kurds. The ITF, they said, seeks a unified Iraq in which all groups can retain their identity by preserving their language, culture and heritage. While the ITF firmly opposes federalism in Iraq based on ethnic or broad geographic divisions, Muratli and Sertturkmen stated that the ITF would support federalism based on the old Iraqi governorates, "like the states in the US or Canada." They said the ITF's new slogan is, "Everything is for Iraq."

13. (SBU) Muratli and Sertturkmen said that the ITF looked forward to elections that would secure Turkmen (and the ITF in particular) seats in government commensurate with their share of the population (they asserted that there were 3 million Iraqi Turkmen) and that would allow other parties who were excluded from the Iraqi Governing council, such as the Constitutional Monarchists, to be represented. PolMilOff went through the details of the Nov. 15 IGC-CPA agreement with them and urged them to be active in the Iraqi political process between now and elections, but cautioned that election results would likely not be strictly along ethnic lines and therefore ethnic groups' representation in government would not be a direct reflection of their share of the population.

14. (SBU) The ITF reps reported that the party has very limited funding and cannot afford to run advertisements or regularly publish a newspaper. They said their funding comes mainly from the Turkmen NGO the Turkmeneli Foundation and from very limited donations from outside Iraq. They said they would continue to maintain offices in Washington, DC, Berlin, London and Ankara for the foreseeable future.

15. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
EDELMAN